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ONTARIO PUBLIC SCHOOL BOARDS' ASSOCIATION

OPSBA CONSULTATION REPORT #IV

THE FUTURE RESPONSIBILITIES OF OUR EDUCATION SYSTEM

May/June, 1992

Ontario Public School Boards' Association

The ONTARIO PUBLIC SCHOOL BOARDS' ASSOCIATION represents over 90 public boards of education from all regions of the province, serving over 1,700,000 students and adult learners. OPSBA speaks for public education in Ontario and represents the interest of the public school trustees to the government, the public and the media.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This brief was prepared by the Policy Committee.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Ontario Public School Boards Association has prepared this report as the necessary first step in developing an association position on the future funding of education. First we must determine the responsibilities of "education" and school boards.

OPSBA states that a clearer definition of education is necessary. There must a "disentanglement" of school boards and the provincial government. However, unlike the municipalities who wish to disengage themselves from joint governance, OPSBA and public school boards support the education partnership. Public school boards wish a re-definition of the provincial-local school board relationship with clearly defined roles for each of the partners.

To achieve this OPSBA has developed a "model" of school board governance responsibilities to meet the current and changing education needs of our citizens.

School boards and the province share the responsibility for:

- all education/instructional programs from junior kindergarten to adults for secondary courses
- school transportation
- school facilities and capital

School boards are responsible for:

- the local component of education/instructional programs
- adult continuing education general interest courses

The provincial government is responsible for:

- job training, skills development (federal/provincial)
- employment support programs
- child care
- health and social support programs for education including for exceptional students
- coordination and management of any integrated health and social support system

Of the above provincial responsibilities, school boards may act as delivery agents in their communities on behalf of the governing body, for such public services as child care, job training and skills development programs, and health and social support programs.

This re-definition of what is included in the mandate of school boards leads to the next step, what is funded in the "education model" and what is funded through other mechanisms. The principles stated in Report I: A Framework for the Future: Principles of our Education System and the model of school board responsibilities in this report will provide the essential starting point for determining a new finance system.

ONTARIO PUBLIC SCHOOL BOARDS' ASSOCIATION

CONSULTATION REPORT SERIES

REPORT IV:

THE FUTURE RESPONSIBILITIES OF OUR EDUCATION SYSTEM

The Future Responsibilities of Our Education System is the fourth consultation document in the OPSBA report series on the future finance, mandate and governance of our education system. OPSBA presents proposals for a clear mandate for locally elected school boards in the delivery of education in our communities. The report responds to the following key questions:

- Who are we responsible for?
- What are we responsible for?
- What is the role of the education system in relation to the broader social and economic goals of our communities and of the Province?

I. INTRODUCTION

The Ontario Public School Boards' Association believes that if we are to meet the challenges of the future, our elementary and secondary education system must be viewed in the wider context of social and economic change. Education must be clearly defined and appropriately funded to meet the broader social and economic goals of this Province.

The Association has undertaken a review of education as a public service to determine:

- the overall directions and goals of education/instructional programs to meet the existing and future needs of our citizens;
- the related programs and support services required to achieve the goals of education;
- the responsibilities of the Province for education programs and services;
- the responsibilities of the locally elected school boards.

Financing the New Framework of Education

The lack of a clear provincial policy and public consensus on the role of schools and what they are expected to achieve, has resulted in an ad hoc expansion of their mandate.

OPSBA welcomes the recent statements of the Ministry of Education in the report Toward Education Finance Reform: A Description of the Present Funding Model and the Education Finance Reform Project:

> "At the same time, the ministry is committed to making fundamental changes in elementary and secondary education. Known as the restructuring initiatives, these changes in learning programs are aimed at redesigning the whole elementary and secondary education system in Ontario. It is a commitment to meeting the needs of students at all stages of their education. The ministry, along with its partners in education, have looked comprehensively at the Early Years, the Formative Years, the Transition Years, and the Specialization Years. It is now time for the individual initiatives of learning programs to be brought together. The Ministry will be announcing a process to ensure that an overall strategic framework is in place"[1].

OPSBA is pleased to note that the government intends to now merge the Ministry of Education's "Restructuring of Education Program" with finance reform. If the development of a new framework for education is to become a serious exercise, then education policy reviews must be done in conjunction with education finance reform. Education programs must be designed to produce high levels of achievement for all. Education finance must cost out such strategies to determine the most "equitable" way to fund the service.

Education "Disentanglement": a Re-definition of the Provincial-Local Partnership

There is no longer a clear delineation of the respective roles of the Province and locally elected school boards. Over the last few years there has been a trend towards standardization and regulation, at the expense of local control. The discussions regarding the future "responsibilities" of school boards must involve a re-definition of the balance of Provincial control and local authority. In conjunction with clearly defined program responsibilities, school boards must have sufficient powers and authority in order to deliver effective and efficient education programs that are reflective of provincial goals and community needs.

The Ontario Public School Boards' Association believes that there must be a "disentanglement" of school board finance from those programs assumed over the years on an ad hoc basis in response to community needs. The responsibility for these programs must either

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[1]Ontario Ministry of Education, Towards Education Finance Reform, March 1992, page 47.

be clearly identified and funded as part of education or they must be re-allocated to the appropriate level of government. From this would evolve a re-definition of the provincial-school board education program, governance and financial relationship.

II. THE CURRENT MANDATE OF SCHOOL BOARDS

Before proceeding it is necessary to clarify the scope of education programs and services that have evolved over the past few years; some in response to community demands and some in response to program "gaps". The concept of education as "reading, writing, and arithmetic" is not a reality. Educators and locally elected officials in the public school environment recognize that we must be forward thinking. What do our citizens need?

The current mandate of school boards is affected by a variety of factors:

- legislation such as the Education Act which contains regulations governing some of the daily operations of school boards, i.e., Regulation 269 for teacher qualifications;
- government policies and laws such as pay equity, Freedom of Information, environmental regulation, etc.;
- federal laws such as the Criminal Code, the Copyright Act;
- program "gaps" such as breakfast programs, social support and counselling.

School boards have a list of responsibilities that they **must** do under law:

- operate and manage education program in accordance with the Act and regulations;
- provide education instruction and adequate accommodation
- keep school buildings in repair in accordance with the Building Code and other legislation;
- provide textbooks free of charge;
- provide special education;
- provide AIDS education, senior kindergarten, drug education, core French instruction, etc.;
- provide child care space in new construction;
- provide French language instruction (where numbers warrant);
- provide Heritage Language instruction (where numbers warrant);
- provide special health support for students: i.e. pediculosis prevention and screening.

School boards **may**

- appoint psychologists or psychiatrists, or guidance teachers;
- provide transportation to and from school;
- provide summer and evening school;
- provide vocational courses of study;
- provide English (French) as a Second Language program;
- provide adult continuing education;
- provide social support services such as career counselling, personal counselling, social work;
- run breakfast and lunch programs;
- operate recreation programs;
- provide crisis intervention, suicide prevention, sex abuse prevention programs;
- operate "parenting" programs;
- provide in the schools such health support as physiotherapy, hearing/vision testing, speech and language diagnosis.

School boards have moved into some of the above areas in response to perceived gaps in services. Many of these programs are necessary to support the needs of the learner. Some of the programs have been assumed by education, as provincial ministries have not provided adequate community support. For example, the deinstitutionalization of the disabled into the community, although recognized as a positive goal, has affected the local education system. School boards with special education students have had to provide the social and health supports to these students that the Ministries of Health and Community and Social Services have not provided.

Other government policies will make the issue of the inter-relationship of education, social services and health even more prominent. The policy initiatives to provide an integrated approach to children's services in the community, and the government's stated goal of "life-long learning" will require a coordinated approach. The funding of such programs must be clarified. The resolution of who is responsible and who pays becomes even more essential.

III. OPSBA'S APPROACH

OPSBA has stated that to determine the responsibilities of the public education system two key questions must be answered: For whom are we responsible and for what are we responsible?

Our analysis of these two fundamental questions follows this format:

What are school boards doing now?
- What is currently legislated by the Province?
- What is permissive?
- What has been assumed in response to community needs?

What should school boards be doing?
- What should be legislated by the Province in the future?
- What should be permissive or local discretion?
- What are school boards doing now in response to community needs that should be clarified?

Who are the clients of the school board?
- School-age children, and what is 'school-age'?
- Adult learners?
- Special client groups?

OPSBA has used its Statement of Principles to guide the discussion. (OPSBA Consultation Report #1 A Framework for the Future: Principles of our Education System)

THE ONTARIO PUBLIC SCHOOL BOARDS' ASSOCIATION
STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES

- THE UNIQUE MANDATE OF PUBLIC EDUCATION
- THE EDUCATION PARTNERSHIP
- LOCAL AUTONOMY
- EQUITY: STUDENT, SCHOOL BOARD, TAXPAYER
- POLITICAL ACCOUNTABILITY
- ADEQUACY

Key in this analysis are the OPSBA principles of student equity and local autonomy. The Association has stated that "Every student should have an equal opportunity to gain the necessary knowledge, skills, and values to be a successful contributing member of society." This interpretation of "equity" suggests equity in access to education programs and services across the Province. OPSBA states that all students in all parts of the Province should have access to an adequate standard of "education".

Equality in access would indicate that there must be some "defined level of education programs and services" available to all across the Province. The "defined level of service" would likely be legislated by the Province, with some standards for delivery. Within this framework, there will also be a requirement for education programs to be tailored to individual needs and to the community profile. **OPSBA believes that in determining what is education and who it serves, the delicate balancing of local control and provincial decision-making, individuality and standardization, must be the driving force.**

IV. WHO ARE THE "CLIENTS"?

The Ontario Public School Boards' Association has determined that public school boards now are responsible for:

- all school-age children regardless of gender, race, religion, ethnic origin, disability or place of residence in the Province;
- adult learners for secondary courses, on the same universal basis as above;
- identified exceptional students on the same universal basis*. (* with the exception of the developmentally challenged who have access to education until the age of 21 years).

Currently the Education Act states that all Boards of Education must provide instructional programs for children ages six to sixteen. Attendance is compulsory for all children from the age of six to sixteen (Section 20(1) of the Education Act). As well, under the present Act school boards may establish kindergarten and junior kindergarten programs. The Ministry of Education has stated its intention to amend the legislation to make both programs mandatory by September 1994. Under the Act individuals are entitled to seven years of secondary education, regardless of age although attendance is voluntary after the age of sixteen years. Boards may provide adult continuing education courses or may contract to provide these courses with a local agency or community college.

Under Section 149 of the Education Act, school boards must provide special education programs and services for its exceptional pupils where the pupil is enroled in the school system. School boards are required to provide early and ongoing identification procedures to meet the educational needs of each child. Presently 66 percent of the exceptional pupils are enroled in the regular classroom for more than 50 percent of the school day."[2]

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[2]Ontario Ministry of Education, Consultation Paper on the Integration of Exceptional Pupils, January 1992, page 2.

By September 1993, all school boards will be required to "integrate exceptional pupils into the local community classroom, wherever possible, when such placement meets the pupil's needs and when it is according to parental choice."[3]

At What Age Does "Education" Begin?

A key policy question in determining who the education system serves and which level of government is responsible, is the age of entry into the system. The controversy is now focused on the provincial government's intention to make it mandatory for all school boards to provide both junior and senior kindergarten. Attendance would still be by parental choice, but the Ministry of Education as part of its "restructuring" of education has already determined that two years of some form of "early learning experience" (junior and senior kindergarten) must be accessible to all across the Province. It is not the function of this exercise to debate the merits of early learning. OPSBA is very much aware of the research that concludes that many (but not all) children benefit from kindergarten and the greater opportunities for language development, social development, intellectual and physical development that the program provides. However, in determining education program responsibilities and funding, there is a need to clarify the differences between:

- the early "education" of children;
- early childhood education, and
- child care.

It is interesting to note that the Ministry of Education itself raises this issue in its consultation report under the Education Restructuring, The Early Years, but has not yet arrived at a clear delineation.

One could conclude that this lack of policy clarity could be a deliberate political omission! Generally the public regards junior kindergarten as an extension of child care, or nursery school. This is evident by the public reaction to the recent decision of the Peel Board of Education to eliminate their junior kindergarten program in September 1992 due to budget restraint. Public opposition has highlighted the fact that the program assists parents with their day care costs. Working parents regard the accessibility of this "free" public service as an essential family support program. This does not negate the validity of "free" family support programs in this day and age when 61 percent of all Ontario women participate in the labour force. (Ontario Economic Outlook, 1992). However, it is to the detriment of the public that needs family support programs and to the detriment of both the local and provincial levels of government, that this confusion

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[3]Ibid, page 2.

continues. How can the Provincial government develop effective public policy on child care, early childhood education and education policy for the early years, if it refuses for purely financial reasons to differentiate between the three?

OPSBA, in defining the age of entrance to the education system, has made a distinction among the three programs: child care, early childhood education and early education. (It should also be noted that only "education" is now considered a public service).

OPSBA Policy Statement:

Education may begin at the age of 3.8 with two years of kindergarten accessible to all, and ends with a maximum of seven years secondary courses or equivalent.

Who are our Clients?

- **All students from age 3.8 to the completion of or the equivalent of seven years secondary education.**

- **All exceptional students age 3.8 to completion of or equivalent of seven years of secondary education** (* with the exception as noted on page 6).

Included in this broad mandate of providing education programs to all from the age of 3.8 years (junior kindergarten) and up, public school boards accept the responsibility to serve the diverse population of this Province. Public school boards recognize the cultural, linguistic, religious differences of our students and accept the challenge of providing education programs for a wide range of students.

The Early Years

OPSBA accepts the responsibility of providing junior and senior kindergarten programs but in a manner that best suits the need of the community. The experience of several years of early education (kindergarten) assists students in building the foundations for more formalized learning. Young children will have the opportunity to develop a strong base in social skills, physical skills, language development and thinking skills. The opportunity to interact with other children and adults enables children to develop attitudes to facilitate the more formal schooling experience which follows. OPSBA states that kindergarten attendance should remain parental choice and the Education Act should not be amended to require students to participate at this early age. However, at least one year of kindergarten preparation should be encouraged to provide the opportunity for student assessment and to facilitate the early identification of potential learning problems.

OPSBA Policy Statement:

In accepting the responsibility for the delivery of junior and senior kindergarten, OPSBA states that this program is an "early education program" that school boards may offer through alternative community-based delivery models.

The Ministry of Education itself in its consultation paper The Early Years, identified the differences between the more structured school environment and the less structured learning environment needed in junior and senior kindergarten programs: "Children learn through play. -- Learning environments for young children should be rich in material they can use to explore, construct, manipulate, represent, pretend, create and express themselves."[4]

We agree with this analysis of the needs of these young children and therefore suggest that kindergarten programs require qualified personnel other than traditional teaching personnel, and a different approach. Junior and senior kindergarten programs are not child care and they are not Early Childhood Education. However, like child care and ECE they do require specialized staffing and a specialized approach.

Adults

At the other end of this spectrum, OPSBA states that the education system has exclusive responsibility for education/instructional programs for all students including adults for Ontario Secondary School Diploma and Ontario Academic Credits. It is the joint responsibility of the Province and local school boards under the mandate of "education" to provide a defined level of education programming for all adults, youths and adults, requiring reentry skills in the areas of a high school diploma, OAC or equivalent. These programs must be appropriately funded and accessible to all.

Exceptional Students

Public school boards accept responsibility for all identified exceptional students as stated above. It should be noted that this mandate refers to education/instructional program for this client group only and does not refer to the health and social support programs now offered in the school system, that are necessary for their learning environment. More will be said about this under the community-based programs section of this report.

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[4]Ontario Ministry of Education, The Early Years Consultation Paper, June 1991, page 8.

OPSBA suggests that public school boards must continue to have the ability to provide a full spectrum of special education programming, some in the community classroom and some in a specialized classroom environment. The local authority and flexibility to provide programming to suit individual and community needs must be balanced with student and parental rights to equal educational opportunities. School boards must also retain the ability to designate a student as "hard-to-serve" and thus the responsibility of the Provincial government.

V. WHAT ARE THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF OUR EDUCATION SYSTEM?

Earlier in this report OPSBA noted the current legal mandate of public school boards and the expanded mandate of education in response to community demands and provincial interests. Fundamental to assessing the future financial needs of the system, is an accurate assessment of what it is that education is doing now, and what it should be doing in the future to meet the broad social and economic goals of this Province. We must also clarify who will have the authority for policy decisions and which level of government will finance the programs and service.

OPSBA has concluded that there will likely in the future be a "defined" level of education programs and services that must be accessible to all across the Province. These are the programs and services that school boards must deliver. These would be legislated by the Province with some standards for their delivery. There will also be a component of education that will be locally driven in response to community needs. This component will be regulated by local decisions and local school board policies.

To determine "what" education programs and services must be available to all in Ontario, OPSBA has divided the question into these areas:

- Education/instructional program
- Adult education
- Child care
- Community-based support programs
- School transportation
- School board central administration

A. EDUCATION/INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAMS

Consistent with the principle of "equity" OPSBA believes that every student should have an equal opportunity to gain the necessary knowledge, skills, and values to be a successful contributing member of society. In its first report in this series OPSBA stated that this did not necessarily suggest the "cookie-cutter" approach to education. The same programs do not have to be delivered in the exact same manner, in every school board in Ontario. However this

does suggest that there must be some "defined level" of education programs and services available to all.

In responding to the OPSBA Discussion Guide Our Education System: Its Future Responsibilities and Finance, member public school boards have concluded that a core education program should be available to all, regardless of such factors as geography or local wealth. The Central Algoma Board of Education called for "a common educational experience across the province which reflects the needs of Canadian society and the global economy". The Grey County Board of Education cited the Saskatchewan Education proposal for a core curriculum that included language arts, mathematics, science, social studies, health education, arts education and physical education. Each required area would contain the unique knowledge, skills, values considered essential for students at the elementary, middle and secondary levels. The North Shore Board of Education stated that a "core program should be mandated for every school board and funded adequately". The Halton Board said that "a core program with local adaptations is the best way to have students achieve to the best of their abilities, the knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary to pursue useful and happy lives in an increasingly complex and changing world". The Atikokan Board of Education has stated that a core program should be available to all students but suggested that optional programming could be decentralized through regional offices to suit different needs across the Province.

A Common Education Experience

OPSBA has concluded that a common, but not necessarily the exact same education experience, must be available to all.

OPSBA Policy Statement:

OPSBA recommends that a "core" education program*, be accessible province wide, such program to have a defined outcome, with measures of student achievement (benchmarks) and clear school board accountability.
(* as described on page 12)

A common program does not suggest the same program. The common program does suggest common goals and objectives.

It is not the purpose of this report to examine education programs and curriculum policy. However it is recognized that goals in "human resource development" are essential. Schools are a socializing force. They also have an obligation to provide all students with the opportunities to become equipped with the skills for life and work. There must be a common level of education program with common goals and objectives. The education system goals and objectives must be measurable, from the perspective of the individual student, the school board, the province and the

public.

OPSBA believes that all public school boards are responsible for any education/instructional programs that are intended to promote these goals:

- communication skills: the ability to read, write and compute with broad-based knowledge and skills in the humanities, sciences, mathematics, technological studies and the practical and fine arts;
- problem-solving/investigational skills: the development of intellectual skills to acquire, analyze, and apply information necessary for life-long learning;
- personal and social skills: to be equipped with the personal and social skills in preparation for life and work;
- individual motivation and commitment: the promotion of self-esteem, individual responsibility and respect for others.

Central to the function of education is the promotion of a full range of skills, knowledge, and attitudes that are the prerequisite to achievement in almost all fields of human endeavour. We will not at this point go through all the education programs currently offered by school boards and determine what is essential to all students in Ontario, program by program, curriculum by curriculum. It is sufficient to say **that all education programs that meet the above goals, that are measured by school boards and the Province by mutually agreed upon benchmarks, would be "core education" or the education commonality.**

These are some examples:

COMMUNICATION

Program examples: English, French, History, Arts, Geography, Technological Studies, Computer Science, etc.

PROBLEM-SOLVING

Program examples: English, French, History, Mathematics, Science, etc.

PERSONAL AND SOCIAL

Program examples: Communications, Life Skills, Physical and Health Education, Aids Education, Drug Education, Arts, Recreation, etc.

INDIVIDUAL MOTIVATION

Program examples: Life Skills, English, History, Mathematics, Health Education, Career Counselling, Arts, Drug Education, etc.

MODEL OF SCHOOL BOARD FUNCTIONS

FUNCTION	CLIENT	ROLE/RELATIONSHIP
Education/ Instructional Program	All students	• Shared • Provincial responsibility: provincially defined level of service • Local responsibility: local programs and policies

B. ADULT EDUCATION

OPSBA has stated in its comments on the consultation document Skills to Meet the Challenge: A Training Partnership for Ontario, that:

"The public school system has a vital role to play in encouraging and facilitating lifelong learning and school boards recognize that they are a pivotal component in any training and adjustment system in that they provide the necessary foundation skills for successful labour force entry and re-entry. These skills are provided through a variety of innovative programs and approaches for youths entering the workforce for the first time and for adults requiring re-entry skills."[5]

Adult Education Secondary Courses

Earlier in this report, it was concluded that school boards have exclusive responsibility for continuing adult education for the secondary school program. Local school boards regard this as a natural component of their education mandate. Public school boards are logically responsible for these programs for this client group, as school facilities are available in all communities through out the Province. Because of the universality of the mandate of public school boards, adult education programs in schools are accessible to all. Provision of this service in the school reduces the potential for overlap and service duplication amongst community colleges, school boards, and other skills training agencies. School boards as elected bodies are accountable to the community for the quality of the programs, and can also be held accountable for the expenditure of tax dollars for the delivery of the above-mentioned components of adult education programming.

OPSBA notes that the total portfolio of adult education, skills development and job training is a multi-party responsibility, as

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[5]Ontario Public School Boards' Association, Response to Skills Meeting the Challenge: A Training Partnership for Ontario, the Ontario Training and Adjustment Board, April 1992, page 2.

stated in the Provincial government proposal to create a new Ontario Training and Adjustment Board. OPSBA has given qualified support to OTAB, and the formal partnership of business, labour, education and social action groups. Within this merger however, OPSBA has stated that school boards must be recognized as having some degree of financial and policy responsibility for the delivery of the secondary education programs in this portfolio.
OPSBA states that public education is one of the major players in labour force development. Therefore there must be recognition of this major role in the organizational structure of the Ontario Training and Adjustment Board and in future financing policies.

The following basic adult education programs must be available in the community from the local school board:

- secondary school credits
- OAC/OSSD

In defining a new role for school boards in adult education, secondary education courses must be the sole responsibility of the school board and be recognized in the new education funding model.

The methods of delivery of the skills development/ training portion of adult education must be flexible in accordance with local needs. Many boards have stated that they should be able to deliver these programs off the school site, if beneficial. The Durham Board of Education for example, highlighted the need for cooperation between school and business and industry, through workplace and cooperative programs. The Dryden Board stated that adult education could be provided in conjunction with such organizations as community colleges, adult literacy groups, and other post secondary institutions.

Skills Development/Job Training

Due to the diversity in circumstances across this Province, it may be logical in some areas for the local school board to also become involved in other skills development/job training programs.

For example, in many northern communities where there is not a community college, local school boards have assumed the responsibility of providing job entry programs, job development and job creation initiatives on a contractual basis with the federal and provincial governments. In 1992 approximately $21 million was provided by Canada Employment and Immigration to school boards for a variety of job entry programs. School boards must have the permissive authority to enter into agreements with the federal and provincial governments under the future Canada-Ontario Labour Force Development Agreements and the Ontario Training and Adjustment Board, to act as service delivery agents for a variety of adult continuing education programs, youth vocational programs, job entry and apprenticeship programs, as defined by community need.

General Interest Courses

There is also a component of adult or continuing education that school boards currently offer in response to community needs that is purely discretionary. This local option must remain. General interest courses, non-credit programs, leisure and recreation activities are offered through local school boards in many areas of the province. In northern communities and more rural areas, the school board is the only source of such services. As this component is not viewed as "essential and universally accessible", OPSBA suggests that school board involvement remain optional and the programs be funded on a cost-recovery or fee for service basis.

MODEL OF SCHOOL BOARD FUNCTIONS

FUNCTION	CLIENT	ROLE/RESPONSIBILITY
Adult Education		
OSSD, OAC, secondary	All students	• Shared:provincial/school board • Provincial: policy and funding • School board: policy & funding of sec. courses
Job training, skills	All	• School Board: optional as delivery agent • Federal/provincial funding
Other, general interest	All	• School Board: optional, for policy and funding

C. CHILD CARE

In responding to the OPSBA Discussion Guide about the future governmental responsibility for child care, the members of OPSBA have clearly stated that the day care of children is not a governance or funding responsibility of school boards. The education of children is their responsibility. The Dryden Board of Education stated that school boards have no role to play in the provision of such services, observing that child care is not an education function. The Prescott Russell Board stated that this service be "limited to ancillary community service". The Durham Board of Education has stated that child care is a "separate entity" that should be integrated with education but not funded from the local property tax base.

In its consultation paper Child Care Reform: Setting the Stage, the provincial government has stated its intention to create a child

care system that is a public service, universally accessible, and affordable. The proposal suggests that there be a new management structure that includes local planning and community participation. The intent is to create a new child care system of non-profit centres which will provide flexible services, choice for parents and better continuity of care for children. The discussion paper notes the role of school boards and the Ministry of Education in providing child care space in schools. The inter-relationships between early childhood education, school kindergarten programs and child care are highlighted.

Although OPSBA's members do not view child care as a policy or funding responsibility of education, there is some interest in perhaps providing child care space in the school site, if fully funded by the Provincial government. This suggests a definite lack of support to the status quo in which school boards are legislated to provide child care space in new school construction with a local tax contribution! Many public school boards have stated support to the continuation of providing child care centres in school sites, but on a full cost recovery basis. The level of government responsible for management of the service should fund its capital construction.

Although one-third of all child care centres are now situated in schools[6] and the Province mandates that all new schools be built with child care centres, public school boards across this province have not expressed any desire to undertake the governmental responsibility of managing, planning, licensing, funding, and delivering child care services. There is however recognition that child care, early childhood education and nursery schools, and education programs and services must be better coordinated in the community, to provide more flexible and continuous day-long service for families.

The Ministry of Community and Social Services has suggested that the school board could be responsible for the coordination of kindergarten programs, with other early childhood education and nursery programs, and with related programs such as child care, after-school support programs, recreation, family support etc. "Community schools are a good example of one type of neighbourhood hub model. They provide a range of services to children and families through child care centres and resource centres, kindergarten, primary and junior grades, as well as after school programs."[7]

School boards do accept responsibility for education beginning at

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[6]Ontario Ministry of Community and Social Services, Child Care Reform: Setting the Stage, page 35.

[7]Ibid, page 5.

age of 3. 8 years. School boards do not accept governance and financial responsibility for the community coordination of kindergarten, other early childhood education, child care and child resource centres. The school may be a logical site in many communities for such an integrated program, but the responsibility for its funding and management must be with either another community agency, municipal government or the provincial government. School boards offer their support and assistance as the logical delivery site for such programs and services. School boards must also be participants of any future coordinating body responsible for local service coordination and planning.

MODEL OF SCHOOL BOARD FUNCTIONS

FUNCTION	CLIENT	ROLE/RESPONSIBILITY
Child Care System (Governance, co-ordination planning, licensing etc.)	Accessible to all	Provincial or Provincial/municipal or Provincial/child care local board
Operating Centres	For all children	School board option as delivery agent for the province or responsible agency, on full cost recovery basis
Child Care Facilities	For all children	Provincial or provincial/ municipal or provincial/child board

D. COMMUNITY BASED PROGRAMS

School boards by necessity have taken on new programs and responsibilities in order to educate. There is a higher percentage of "at risk" students in our education system than in the past, due to the increasing incidence of child poverty. The New Brunswick Commission on Excellence in Education has noted this issue in its review of education, Issues Paper #1, Schools for a New Century:

> "While laudable efforts are being made by some school boards to assist hungry children, schools currently lack the wherewithal to tackle the challenges posed by children whose cognitive development is impaired by the

> economic, emotional and educational deprivation of their out-of-school lives. Given the centrality to their communities, schools cannot avoid the consequences of child poverty."[8]

Health and social support programs are necessary if school boards are to take seriously their responsibilities for educating "exceptional" students; those with learning disabilities or the physically or mentally handicapped. The education of exceptional students requires a higher level of resource support for the pupil and the teacher. The types of resources required are: special format materials (braille, hearing aids), modified facilities, health support services (nurses, hearing specialists), and social support services (psychologists, social workers). The previous list of "expanded" school board programs has a growing component of such services. School boards have moved into this area to support the needs of the learner as the programs are not being adequately provided by the Ministries of Health and Community and Social Services.

The need to "coordinate" education with other social services has been widely debated in the past few years. The Report of the Advisory Committee on Children's Services: Children First, stated that "mainstream" services such as education, health, child recreation, must be linked to specialized service providers, that mental health treatment, family therapy, crisis intervention, and other specialized services be available through mainstream services, and that those responsible for these services be the focal point for their organization.

The coordination of education extends beyond the coordination of children' services, to the need to coordinate education and adult re-training initiatives of school boards with the related programs of the community college system and local agencies. There is no shortage of ideas on how school boards may provide a more formalized and recognized role in addressing the full range of community support, from early childhood intervention to adult training and literacy. There is logic in establishing a relationship between education, job training programs, welfare, and child care services in the community. The 1986 Report of the Social Assistance Review Committee, Transitions recommended an expansion of cooperative education programs for students in secondary schools and in-school child care programs to better able returning students to complete their schooling.

Public school boards have observed the need to define the roles of the ministries and agencies at both the local and provincial levels, and the need for coordination at the provincial level

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[8]New Brunswick Commission on Excellence in Education, Issue Paper #1, Schools for a New Century, January 1992, page 10.

between the ministries of Health, Community and Social Services, Education, and Colleges and Universities.
The issue is complex:

- What health, social, and community support programs are required by education for the full range of student population, childhood to adult, to facilitate its primary mandate, learning?

- What is the "responsibility" of the local school board for these community support programs?

- What level of government should be responsible for their integrated management?

OPSBA Policy Statement:

OPSBA states that public school boards do not accept the management and funding responsibility for the necessary health and social support programs.

The Provincial Ministries of Health and Community and Social Services are responsible for managing and funding community health and social supports for education.

Public school boards may delivery the programs on the school site, as a delivery agent for the provincial government.

There must be a wide range of health and social support programs in all communities to support education. Not all children come into the school system ready and able to learn, and this must be recognized in provincial social policy and funding. These programs should the responsibility of the province, but not be "legislated" or mandated. Health and social support programs must be delivered in response to the needs of the population of the area. These programs should reflect the diversity of circumstances across the Province and be subject to variety in service design and method of delivery.

School boards could cooperate with social service agencies for the delivery of health and social support programs in the school system. Public school boards are united in the consensus that local boards of education should not bear the financial responsibility for these non-educational programs and services. As access to these types of services is essential to the teaching environment and also essential to the community, these health and social programs are the responsibility of the provincial government.

<u>An Integrated Local Management (Governance) System?</u>

The issue of which level of government should assume the local responsibility for components of the social services framework is

under review at this point in time by the Steering Committee on Provincial-Local Relationships (disentanglement) and by the Fair Tax Commission: Property Tax Working Group. It has been recognized that the social services system has become large, complex and can no longer be managed in the same manner as in the past. One solution that has been suggested by the Premier's Council on Health Well-being and Social Justice is the "devolution" or transfer of authority for health and social services budget allocation, management, planning and evaluation to regional boards at the local level. The other governance model for consideration is the one of the Report of the Children's Services Advisory Committee, that the local school board become a children's services board, and assume the responsibility for the coordination of children's support services.

When the provincial government discusses possible policy options regarding the future management of an integrated health and social support system for either children services or other health and social support services, public school boards must involved. If, for example, this re-alignment of roles and responsibilities takes place at the Provincial-Local Steering Committee on Disentanglement, school trustees must be represented at this table.

At that point in time, OPSBA would review its position regarding the future role of school boards and their potential role in service planning and management of these health and social support programs.

MODEL OF SCHOOL BOARD FUNCTIONS

FUNCTION	CLIENT	ROLE/RESPONSIBILITY
Community-Based Programs		
School health support services	All students	Provincial: funding & management
School social support services	All students	Provincial: funding & management
Employment support programs	All students	Provincial: funding & management

E. SCHOOL TRANSPORTATION

The current Education Act states that school boards **may** provide transportation to and from the school that the pupil attends or to other schools, if programs are attended at that site. School boards receive transportation grants to recognize some of the costs

of transporting pupils from home to school and school to school. The transportation grant of the General Legislative Grant program is based on need as determined by pupil population density. There is in many cases a significant local tax contribution to the transportation services of school boards.

Is transportation an essential service of a school board? Could this service be provided elsewhere? Should there be several school bus systems, one for each school board jurisdiction in the area?

OPSBA states that if transportation is needed to ensure that pupils are able to attend school because of distance or disability, then the service for these students is an essential one and must be accessible. However it is recognized that geography and composition of student population are key factors in determining school busing needs. As there is a need to tailor the service to the jurisdiction, it is reasonable to recommend that transportation although necessary in many situations, remain at local discretion.

In response to the financial strains on the education system and the mounting public pressure for less duplication, OPSBA recommends that school boards be encouraged through financial incentives to develop alternative transportation delivery models. New and cost-effective ways to bus students that must be explored are:

- joint transportation services of coterminous school boards
- cooperative arrangements with municipalities for providing school transportation to some students (for those areas that have municipal transit systems)
- regional transit authorities for: school busing, municipal transit, handicapped transportation etc.

MODEL OF SCHOOL BOARD FUNCTIONS

FUNCTION	CLIENT	ROLE/RESPONSIBILITY
Transportation	Those needing the service	• Shared Provincial/school boards: policy and finance

F. SCHOOL BOARD CENTRAL ADMINISTRATION

OPSBA defines "central administration" as the management of the education system in the community. It comprises the "executive" or policy function of the locally elected board as well as the administrative support to the system. Examples of school board activities in this area are, curriculum development, professional development and staff training, waste audits and waste reduction planning, facility planning and management, etc.

There has been an increase in provincial and federal legislation and regulation that has impacted school board operations, in the same manner that the legislation also governs and affects other governments and government agencies. Examples are: pay equity legislation, occupational health and safety improvements, environmental regulation and guidelines, copyright legislation, and changes to the Criminal Code and the Young Offenders Act. A portion of school board expenditures and therefore local costs can be directly attributed to the decision-making of these other levels of government.

If one accepted the principle of political accountability, that is that the level of government that makes the decision should pay for its costs, then one could also conclude that the provincial government should finance some portion of school board management costs that are the direct result of provincially mandated requirements. To the extent that there are costs resulting from compliance with provincial legislation and regulation, these costs should be financed to a greater degree by the provincial government. School boards accept the expression of "provincial interest" for such things as environmental goals, employment equity, pay equity. In the interests of political accountability and clarity to the tax payer, the provincial government should fund its standards. This principle must be recognized in the future provincial-school board governance and finance relationship.

VI. CONCLUSION

OPSBA'S MODEL OF SCHOOL BOARD/ PROVINCIAL RELATIONSHIPS

SHARED	PROVINCE	SCHOOL BOARDS
Education/ instructional program - J.K. to adult - exceptional students - adults for secondary school courses	• Job training skills development* • Child care • Health & social support programs for all, including exceptional students	• Education/ instructional program: local programs & policies • Adult continuing education, general interest • recreation, after-school programs etc
School Transportation School facilities/ capital	• Coordination/management of integrated health & social supports • Employment support programs	

* School boards are responsible for the secondary component of job training/skills development programs.

School boards may deliver in their communities on behalf of the provincial government, municipal government or local board:

- child care
- job training/skills development programs
- employment support programs
- health and social support services

The Ontario Public School Boards' Association hopes that this model provides a clear picture of the role of the provincial government and the role of locally elected school boards in providing education and education support programs to all students. The association has attempted to bring some focus to the discussion of what programs and services are needed for all students at all stages of their education and which level of government should be responsible for these programs.

This definition of "responsibilities" within the education partnership provides a framework for the next step, determining a new funding model for education. OPSBA will use this framework in the next stage, Report V: OPSBA's Proposed Education Funding Model(s), to be circulated to members this summer. The clarification of who does what leads to the next question, who pays for what. The principles, as stated in OPSBA's first report A Framework for the Future: Principles for our Education System, will provide a useful backdrop for assessing finance. The "principles" and the "model of responsibility" will provide essential background in weighing the issues, options and alternatives for a new education funding system.

Some Things To Think About:

- OPSBA's statement that there must be a common education experience across the province with a defined level of education program accessible to all, suggests that the provincial government would play a more significant role in funding this component of education. Would the provincially mandated level of education be fully funded by the Province? Should it be seventy-five percent provincially funded or sixty percent funded? This would depend on the amount of provincial control versus local control.

- The principle of political accountability suggests the concept of "pay for say"; those who make the decisions should pay for all or the most significant part of the service. If a defined level of education service is to be regulated in some manner by the provincial government, that level of government should finance this component. Locally elected school boards would finance the portion of education that is locally determined in response to unique community needs.

- The principle of student equity also supports universal

accessibility to education programs, but as also noted, it does not mean the same programs delivered in the same way across the province. Diversity can be a source of strength. And local diversity and decision-making require local tax expenditures.

- The principle of local autonomy also suggests that all decisions cannot be made at Queen's Park. It could lead one to conclude that some portion of the education grant must be "unconditional" to meet local needs and decision-making. As well there must be room for local taxation as a locally controlled revenue base.

- The concept of political accountability stresses that the education relationship must be clarified so our citizens know whom to hold accountable. There must be a clear relationship between authority and responsibility for taxes and expenditures.

- To achieve school board resource equity, OPSBA has stated that we must find a new way to measure resource equalization. The future funding model must address resource equalization: what is the measure of "wealth" within the local board's jurisdiction, and what is the individual taxpayer's ability to pay. Resource equalization is essential to the achievement of an "equitable" education system which provides equal access to all. Perhaps we need more than one funding model to address diversity in resources and diversity in programs.

OPSBA has provided some insight to the first step in developing a new education finance system. This report comes to some conclusions on: whom education serves, what programs are "education" and shared between the provincial and locally elected school board. Once education is clearly defined it can be appropriately funded to meet the social and economic goals of our communities and of the province.